

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /079 W

-----041025Z 049188 /22

R 040834Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7976

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 4921

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, RP, LY, XF

SUBJ: MINDANAO DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A) MANILA 4644; B) MANILA 2453

SUMMARY: GOP HAS RELEASED TEXT OF PROCLAMATION 1628 ESTABLISHING "AUTONOMY" IN THIRTEEN PROVINCES OF SOUTH AND PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING PRESS, LEADERS OF MNLF INVITED TO HOLD FIFTEEN OUT OF 29 POSITIONS IN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT. (THEIR RESPONSE NOT YET AVAILABLE.) GOP HAS ALSO ANNOUNCED TEN REFERENDUM QUESTION (TEXT SEPTTEL) APPARENTLY IN ADDITION TO THOSE FORMULATED IN FEBRUARY. RESULTS OF "REMARK SHEETS" ALSO TO BE USED IN APRIL 17 POLLING WILL HAVE SAME FORCE AS ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS, PROVIDING GOP WITH ANOTHER MEANS TO ORCHESTRATE RESULTS. MRS. MARCOS ARRIVED MANILA APRIL 2 WITH FOUR LIBYANS IN TOW, ONE OF THEM REPORTEDLY A COUSIN OF QADHAFI AND LEADING ORGANIZER OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN PAST. PUBLICITY SUGGESTS THAT VOTERS ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO VOTE FOR MINIMAL "AUTONOMY," PROBABLY IN FEWER THAN THIRTEEN PROVINCES, BUT MARCOS IS ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE HIMSELF ROOM FOR MANEUVER. END SUMMARY.

1. PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. TEXT OF PROCLAMATION 1628
DECLARING AUTONOMY AND ESTABLISHING PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
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IN SOUTH FOLLOWS OUTLINE SET FORTH BY MARCOS IN MARCH 29 TALKATHON (REF A). PROCLAMATION "DECLARES AUTONOMY" IN THIRTEEN PROVINCES; CREATES "PRIVISIONAL GOVERNMENT," AND STATES THAT APRIL 17 REFERENDUM "SHALL DETERMINE THE MANNER IN WHICH THE INHABITANTS OF THE AREAS OF AUTONOMY MAY WISH TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE FORMULA PROPOSED

BY COL. MUAMMAR AL QADHAFI..." PROCLAMATION STATES THAT PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO BE COMPOSED OF SEVEN MEMBERS APPOINTED BY PRESIDENT OF WHOM TWO (2) TO BE FROM MNLF AND ONE FROM "OTHER LIBERATION FRONTS IN THE PROVINCES CONCERNED." HOWEVER ACCORDING PRESS OF APRIL 4, MARCOS HAS OFFERED 15 OUT OF 29 POSITIONS IN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO MNLF LUMINARIES, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN NUR MISUARI, VICE CHAIRMAN ABDUL KHAYER ALONTO, LEADER OF MNLF CEASEFIRE DELEGATION THAM MANJOORSA, "FOREIGN MINISTER" HASHIM SALAMAT, ETC. ACCORDING PRESS, MNLF HAS NOT YET RESPONDED TO THIS OFFER WHICH WAS MADE ON MARCH 30. OTHER MEMBERS OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE GOVERNORS OF THIRTEEN PROVINCES, PLUS COMMISSIONER OF REGION XII SIMEON DATUMANONG. ALTHOUGH NOT STATED IN PROCLAMATION 1628, MARCOS HAS ANNOUNCED THAT PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE UNDER AUTHORITY OF DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DGLCD).

2. REFERENDUM/PLEBISCITE. MARCOS HAS ANNOUNCED 10 QUESTIONS (TEXT SEPTEL.) ACCORDING PRESS THESE ARE ADDITIONAL TO QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED IN FEBRUARY (REF B) WHICH A) ASKED VOTERS OF REGIONS IX AND XII IF THEY WISHED THEIR REGIONS TO BE MERGED, AND B) ASKED VOTERS OF PALAWAN, DAVAO DEL SUR AND SOUTH COTABATO IF THEY WISHED THEIR REGIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN NEW AREA RESULTING FROM MERGER OF REGIONS IX AND XII.

3. ACCORDING PRESS; VOTERS OF FIVE PROVINCES (TAWI TAWI, BASILAN, MAGUINDANAO, SOUTH COTABATO AND SULTAN KUDARAT) WILL ALSO BE ASKED AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION TO BE LOCATED IN "REMARK SHEET" WHETHER THEY WISH THEIR PROVINCE TO BE

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BE CONSIDERED A "REGULAR PROVINCE." COMMENT: THIS CONFUSING ADDITION APPARENTLY RESULTS FROM FACT THAT CRITICS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THESE PROVINCES WERE ALL CREATED SINCE ADVENT OF MARTIAL LAW BY DECREE AND WITHOUT BENEFIT OF PLEBISCITE, THUS UNDERCUTTING GOP ARGUMENT THAT ARTICLE XI (3) OF CONSTITUTION REQUIRES PLEBISCITE IN EVENT OF CHANGE IN EXISTING FORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. END COMMENT.

4. ACCORDING WHAT APPEARS AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT IN "DAILY EXPRESS," NEW QUESTIONS (AND REITERATION OF VALIDITY OF TWO QUESTIONS PROPOSED IN FEBRUARY) ARE CONTAINED IN PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 1111 (TEXT NOT YET AVAILABLE.)

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DECREE ALSO STIPULATES INCLUSION OF "REMARK SHEETS". WHERE VOTERS MAY EXPLAIN ANSWERS AND PROVIDES THAT RESULTS OF REMARKS AS ANALYZED BY COMELECT WILL HAVE "THE SAME BINDING FORCE AND EFFECT" AS RESULTS FROM BALLOTS. ACCORDING PRESS, COMELEC CHAIRMAN PEREZ EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT USE OF REMARK SHEETS IS "MANDATORY" FOR ALL VOTERS.

5. MRS. MARCOS RETURNED TO MANILA APRIL 2 WITH USUAL EXTRAVAGANT AIRPORT WELCOME. IN ADDITION TO REMARKS ABOUT "UNSEEN ADVERSARIES" DISCUSSED SEPTEL, SHE CONFIRMED THAT SHE HAD MET WITH KING KHALAD OF SAUDI ARABIA IN LONDON AND THAT HE WAS "JUBLIANT" REGARDING REPORTED SETTLEMENT IN MINDANAO. SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FOUR LIBYANS, KHADDAF-ADDAM, (IDENTIFIED AS JOURNALIST AND COUSIN OF COL. QADHAFI AND REPORTEDLY A LEADING ORGANIZER OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY--SEE SEPTEL) PLUS TWO "WOMEN OFFICIALS" AND HEAD OF LIBYAN OBSERVER GROUP TO MINDANAO CEASEFIRE.

6. COMMENT: PUBLIC IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONFUSED AS TO WHETHER TEN REFERENDUM QUESTIONS WILL STAND ALONE OR (AS WE UNDERSTAND IT) ARE SUPPLEMENTAL TO THOSE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED (REF B). EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO CONFIRM THIS POINT WITH COMELEC MEMBERS (MANY OF WHOM ARE DEPARTING FOR MINDANAO TO COMPLETE PREPARATIONS FOR POLLING.)
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ACCORDING TO MEDIA, VOTERS IN MINDANAO ARE CHORUSING THAT THEY INTEND TO VOTE "NO" ON FIRST NINE OF TEN NEW QUESTIONS--I.E., AGAINST ALL BUT APPROVAL OF TOOTHLESS "REGIONAL AUTONOMY: FORMULA ENDORSED BY BATASAN BAYAN (LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL) IN FEBRUARY. PROVISION THAT COMMENTS ON "REMARK SHEETS" WILL HAVE SAME

FORCE AS ANSWERS TO YES AND NO QUESTIONS ON BALLOTS GIVES
GOVERNMENT FURTHER LEEWAY TO MANIPULATE RESULTS. THRUST
OF PUBLICITY THUS FAR SUGGESTS PUBLIC IS BEING ENCOURAGED
TO VOTE FOR MINIMAL AUTONOMY UNDER STRICT GOVERNMENT
CONTROL PROBABLY IN FEWER THAN THIRTEEN PROVINCES, ALONG
LINES SPELLED OUT BY PRESIDENT ON MARCH 29. AT SAME TIME,
AND PENDING LIKELY NEGATIVE MNLF REACTION TO RECENT EVENTS,
MARCOS IS ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE HIMSELF AMPLE ROOM FOR FURTHER
MANEUVER.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTERIM GOVERNMENT, SELFGOVERNMENT, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANILA04921
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770116-0438
Format: TEL
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770491/aaaadbpe.tel
Line Count: 180
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 573701ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MANILA 4644, 77 MANILA 2453
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2908754
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINDANAO DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PDEV, RP, LY, XF, MNFL
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/573701ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009